

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Report of the proceedings of the 76th (1980) Annual
Conference held at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London

Friday: April 4th 11 a.m. to 1.45 p.m. 13 branches
represented by 29 delegates. Not
represented: Bolton, Edinburgh,
North East, and West Yorkshire.

Saturday: April 5th 1.50 p.m. to 6 p.m. 17 branches
represented by 31 delegates. All
branches represented.

Sunday: April 6th 10.55 a.m. to 6 p.m. 15 branches
represented by 31 delegates.
North East and West Yorkshire not
represented.

Collections

Friday: £64.02½

Saturday: £27.50½

Sunday: £37.40

Chairmen and Deputy Chairman

Cdes D Davies (Westminster) and B Valinas (Central) were nominated as Chairman. Cde Valinas withdrew. It was Agreed that Cde D Davies take the chair. Cde H Vallor (Glasgow) was then nominated from the floor as Deputy Chairman and it was Agreed she take the Deputy Chair.

Standing Orders Committee reported:

1. That Glasgow, Islington, Lewisham and West Yorkshire had submitted their Forms C late. Only West Yorkshire had not presented an explanation in accordance with Rule 8. The branches requested they be permitted to sit. The explanations received were offered to Conference to hear, but Conference declined. The MOTION (Howell of Guildford and Moss of Swansea) "That the delegates be allowed to sit" was Agreed.
2. On behalf of Islington Branch, that the branch's current membership was 20, but that shown on their Form C less than 20. The Executive Committee had carried the following resolution on 18th March 1980 - 'That Islington be informed that in the Executive Committee's opinion they are entitled to 3 delegates.' Points raised were: a proper cut off date was required; past practice had been the Form C; the Form C was audited; Islington Branch strength had risen by a further 3 members; the number of delegates should represent the strength of the branch. MOTION (P Deutz of Redbridge and H Cottis of Southend) "That this Conference considers the Form C at 31st December to be the basis for deciding branch representation at Annual Conference." On a point of order, the Chair ruled that only 2 Islington delegates could vote. On a MOTION (L Dale of West London and C Skelton of Camden) "That the vote be taken", which was carried 15-7, the Floor Resolution was Carried 18-8.

Tellers

It had been Agreed that Standing Orders Committee act as Tellers.

Order of Business

Points raised:

Past practice has been to consider the Executive Committee Report as the basis for Conference to develop Instructed Resolution, and Items for Discussion to be taken as appropriate to the Executive Committee Report. An opposing view was to take items in the order they appeared on the Agenda - it was pointed out that the first item on the Agenda was the Executive Committee Report. Delegates should decide themselves what should be dealt with as Conference progressed. Floor Resolution (V Brown and E Smith of Westminster) "That this Conference consider Resolution No. 1 (Westminster Branch) under Item No. 2 on the Agenda, in order to decide upon the order of business of Conference." On this item there was an appeal that members do not tie themselves up with procedure. Amendments to Rules should be dealt with by a maximum branch representation. The Floor Resolution was Lost 14-14. The Chairman stated that she could ensure all resolutions were dealt with.

Conference then proceeded to deal with the Executive Committee's Report to Conference.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Executive Committee Attendances and Members were also taken.

Under this item the following

Instructed Resolution 2a (Islington Branch) "That Conference recognises that the present method of electing the Executive Committee is insufficiently democratic because the majority of voters have inadequate knowledge of the suitability of candidates. Conference instructs branches which nominate candidates for the Executive Committee to provide written statements (not exceeding 400 words) giving reasons for doing so; these to be sent to all members with their ballot papers."

Southend Branch Amendment "Amend line 7 to ('Not exceeding 150 words')."

Westminster Branch Amendment "Amend line 7 to 'Not exceeding 80 words'."

Glasgow Branch Amendment "Delete 'Conference instructs' on line 5 and on line 6 delete 'to' and insert 'may'."

Points raised

There was a need for members outside London to have information on candidates for the Executive Committee. 400 words were too much; 150 words of non-personal details sufficient. It would result in too much paperwork. Statements would be

the candidates' attitudes. If allowed, they should not be bound by any number of words. Candidates should be known as useful before standing. Remote members are able to learn who is reliable. Postage costs would be high. There should be a right of reply. It was hard to decide what makes a good Executive Committee member, but members could decide for themselves and did not need telling. Members should take the trouble to find out. Time in the Party did not relate to being a good or bad Executive Committee member. At Trade Union Conferences 2/3 pages of candidates' details gave as much knowledge at the end of the day as at the beginning. Trade Unions have hundreds of thousands of members; we only 500, and most know each other. There would be a stain on Head Office. As these circulars would be pro the members, why not some against?

Vote: Southend Amendment Lost 0-30
Westminster Amendment Lost 9-24
Glasgow Amendment Carried 19-15
Sub Resolution 2 (a) Lost 11-25

Also under Executive Committee Attendances and Membership

Instructed Resolution 2 (b) (Redbridge Branch) "That Notices of Motion given at Executive Committee meetings must be seconded before being accepted by the Chairman and recorded in the Minutes."

Points raised It would be Notices of Motion in line with ordinary resolutions and prevent their use as internal propaganda tools. It was up to the Executive Committee to make their own Standing Orders.

Vote: Resolution 2 (b) Carried 22-13

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Members and Organisation Taken under this were

Instructed Resolution 4 West London Branch "That this Conference views with displeasure the abusing of members by other members that has been a feature of the Party in the last 3 years. It considers that letters, circulars and other statements naming members as liars and rogues, denying their right to be members, disparaging and interfering with Party activity, have caused and still cause grave harm in the Party. While the Conference accepts that what has been done cannot be undone, it is determined that this tendency shall not continue, and instructs the Executive Committee to take firm action over any instances in future."

Southend Branch Addendum "Conference notes apparent improvement in the situation and hopes that the Executive Committee will use their powers to maintain this." But before discussion could commence: MOTION (Selwyn and Brown of Westminster) "Next Business". On a point of procedure, Conference Agreed that delegate for West London and Southend could 'open' as the resolutions would have to be presented to Conference. After the 2 delegates the MOTION "Next Business" was Lost 12-20

Points raised in the discussion were: West London had raised the resolution because of the actions of various cdes. Members should behave in a manner which does not lose our credibility in non-members eyes, especially visitors to branches. The Executive Committee had not taken any positive action and it was felt the Executive Committee had even blocked action, allowing it to get out of hand. The increase in internal Party circulars on the behaviour of members was discouraging and almost forced a branch out of existence. No matter who was right or wrong, uncomradely behaviour should stop. There had been a recent improvement in attitudes. The Executive Committee should discuss matters in a reasonable and responsible manner. Members must work together, but should not mistake liberty with licence. A delegate expressed the view that members should say what they like. It was difficult to tell fact from fiction on the points raised. The animosity had gone on for more than 3 years. The particular comrade concerned is a maverick, not a conspiracy, leading no-one, honest but uncouth, a symptom - not the cause. Any limits to expression in a democratic organisation are dangerous. Some members come near to nervous breakdowns during the last 3 years; smear campaigns had been run; it has been the worst period in the Party's history. Some branches are only active on this controversy. All the comrade concerned did was to get himself voted off the Executive Committee. This controversy is a London problem. It is not good enough to complain only if people you like are abused. This discussion will give a guide to the Executive Committee what to do in future. Sometimes strong action should be taken - positive not only for Socialism, but also in reaction to negative people. Serious allegations were made against comrades, but never either pursued or withdrawn. If a person is considered unsuitable for membership, then that member must be charged. There was a process in the Party to dilute the Party case. If the Party changes its view on a subject from new information, then the latest should be used in a constructive way. It was unfortunate the discussion had concentrated on only one member. The general abuse on the Executive Committee had badly effected the Party. Executive Committee Standing Orders are a matter for Conference, not only the Executive Committee. The issue was not considered dead.

3.
Branches can be active without another branch knowing about it. The Executive Committee do have rights. It was up to the Party to sweep it under the carpet if it so wished, but the misbehaviour must stop.

Vote: Southend Amendment Lost 16-21
West London Resolution Carried 29-13

The Conference adjourned at 1.45 p.m.

Conference re-commenced at 2.55 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Organisation Dealt with this were

Instructed Resolution 5 (a) Guildford Branch "That the Party take on a full-time Head Office Assistant."

Bolton Addendum "Add 'Paid' before 'full-time'."

Impossible to exist with present part-time Head Office staff. It would need considerable commitment and be best to pay some-one to be there full-time. Not enough jobs to do yet. The Guildford circular had not considered the Head Office structure. Membership was restricted by the lack of a paid Head Office Assistant. The General Secretary should be paid as Head Office Assistant is only a general dog-body. An answerphone would be preferable. The Party, as an employer, would have to be a good rate.

Vote: Bolton Addendum Lost 20-25
Guildford Resolution Lost 19-25

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Organisation Also dealt with under this heading was

Instructed Resolution 5 (b) Islington Branch "That this Conference holds that there is no contravention of the S.P.G.B. principles in investing surplus funds to the best interest of the Party."

Bolton Addendum "Add after 'Party' in last line 'provided that any new investment has been previously discussed and approved by Conference'."

The principle of taking interest had been accepted, so go for the better interest rates. Party funds must not wither away. The Party must decide where to invest, not individuals. Funds collected for propaganda - not to keep in the bank. By dabbling in the stock exchange, we are making a rod to break our own backs. The Treasurer reported £10,000 was in a one-month Special Deposit Account, with a further £10,000 in a six-month Special Deposit Account.

Vote: Bolton Addendum Lost 19-24
Islington Resolution Lost 11-32

Amendments to Rules

Rule 2 Redbridge Branch "Delete 'may' and insert 'Shall' on line 11 so it reads 'shall be lapsed by the branch'."

The change would make members remember their responsibility to pay dues. Not clear branches could still use discretion.

Vote: Lost 9-38

Rule 10 Islington Branch "Insert 'excepting leaflets about branch meetings and' after the comma on the last line."

Sometimes the Executive Committee were in a better position to put the Party case than branches. Leaflets must be seen by the whole Party, not just a branch. Members are capable of checking them; even a paragraph must at present be agreed by the Executive Committee. Leaflets only have a very short life. Members of Aberdeen Group were expelled on this issue - there was nothing to urgent they could not have waited a short while. A copy could be sent to the Executive Committee for information. Executive Committee only amend on questions of principle, not style. It could not be assumed all branches will adhere to Party principle.

Vote: Lost 20-27

Rule 22 Swansea Branch "On line 2 delete 'ten' and insert 'twenty'."

Changes needed as it depressed the chances of getting a branch going. Important voting represented branches.

Vote: Lost 2-22

Rule 23 Westminster Branch "On line three insert between the words 'and' and 'amendments' the words 'every other year'."

Each year insufficient time to discuss. An annual review of Rules was unhealthy. Members should think twice before submitting items.

Vote: Lost 20-28

Rule 26 West London Branch "After the second 'or' on line 3 delete 'by six or more branches' and insert 'at least one third of the total number of branches'."

Vote: Lost 9-28

Rule 28 Camden Branch "At the end of the last line add 'prior to the nomination papers being lodged with the Returning Officer'."

Code of conduct laid down by previous Conference and Annual Delegate Meeting was not obeyed at last election. The Executive Committee must in future receive the nomination paper to consider and, if necessary, take action. An apology had been made for the last confusion. Parliamentary Committee should administer it. At Lambeth there had been no time to submit a list; they decided to break a rule to carry on the campaign. Lambeth had had no preparatory work. Campaigns must be prepared well in advance.

Vote: Carried 41-6

Rule 29 Westminster Branch "Delete the whole of the Rule and replace with 'Candidates elected to a political office shall act on the instructions of the local branch and the Executive Committee!'"

The Rule should not even be in the Rule Book as it does not deal with the current running of the Party, but with the future when Socialism is approaching. It was put in so that people voted for our case and not individuals - to accept us or not. Power in itself is never especially useful, but there would be a great propaganda value of we did win a seat. It would be extraordinary if only one candidate was elected. It only concerns marginal constituencies. Party tends to say 'all or nothing'.

Vote: Lost 23-23 after a re-vote.

End of Amendments to Rules

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Party Funds Organisers It was questioned why the report was amended. In reply it was said some Executive Committee members felt that it lacked evidence. The ex-Party Funds Organisers object to their names being appended to the amended report. They read the deleted part, which concerned members not contributing due to the bad feelings in the Party and stated it was not unsound. They stood down because of the Executive Committee's lack of confidence in them. With the Grattan Estate there should be no need for special fund raising of £6,000 per year, which the comrades had tried to raise. The Executive Committee should have gone back to the committee on the amendment. Names should not be appended to any individual report in the Executive Committee's Report. Prefer funds from living members to dead ones. No Executive Committee should try and claim a report is of their sub-committee if they have changed it.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Head Office Assistant Floor Resolution (Cox and Hopwood of Guildford) "This Conference recommends to the Executive Committee that the Party acquire a telephone answering service."

The telephone should be answered on a 24 hour basis. Cost between £95 per year and £200/£300 to buy.

Vote: Carried 32-1

Instruction Resolution 1 Westminster Branch "That in order to save time and make for a more efficient Conference, delegates shall decide at the start the order in which Agenda items and reports shall be dealt with: that the Executive Committee's Report to Conference shall be taken as read (by the branches previously) and that a definite period be set aside for Delegates to discuss, or ask questions about the contents of the Report. Additional references to the Executive Committee Report shall be at the discretion of Delegates as and when they think appropriate."

No apparent order in Executive Committee's Report to Conference or the Agenda. Resolution would allow branches to plan. Executive Committee Report should not structure Conference and it should be assumed the report has been read. Would it mean set times? Conference is unpredictable. Procedure should be laid down by Standing Orders Committee. There would be a danger in delegates 'sloping off' and coming back for the vote. Delegates should prepare for Conference. Put Agenda in same order as Conference Report. Agenda and Report do not go out together. A 20 minute period could be used to discuss the order of business.

Vote: Lost 12-27

Conference adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Saturday, 5th April

Conference re-commenced at 1.50 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Socialist Standard Production Committee Dealt with this were

Instructed Resolution 7(a) Guildford Branch "That this Conference instructs the Socialist Standard Production Committee to open the pages of the Socialist Standard to debate with our opponents."

Object would be to have our statement one month, our opponents' the next, etc. or both in same issue. It would extend the Socialist Standard's readership. Good, if we get similar space on opponents journals. Use the debates for our purposes, but not to give our pages over to opponents. Split months dangerous. Debates are good on tape, but fall flat when written up. Not the Party's business to put opponents' case. Giving space to critics would enhance the Socialist Standard's letters' page open to opponents.

Vote: Lost 20-25

Standing Orders Committee

Reported that West Yorkshire Branch delegate credentials were delayed in the post. Conference agreed that the one delegate be allowed to sit.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Socialist Standard Production Committee contd ..

Instructed Resolution 7 (b) Camden Branch "That this Conference is of the opinion that indoor Party propaganda meetings should always be given reasonable display space in the Socialist Standard. Requests for such space by branches or committees should be considered on their merits, i.e. size of venue and subject matter of the meeting."

Amendment Islington Branch "Delete all after 'should' on line 2 and replace with 'only given display space if, in the opinion of the Socialist Standard Production Committee, such displays are of particular propaganda value for the Party as a whole. Other announcements for meetings should appear in the monthly events column.'"

The object is to ratify the Annual Delegate Meeting resolution. The branch had had difficulty getting block display advertisements for its lectures in the Socialist Standard. The size of the advertisement should correspond to the importance of the meeting to show the life of the Party; not up to the discretion of the Socialist Standard Production Committee, as they had consistently refused. The object is to alert members to support the meeting. Meetings need to be organised well. Posters bring people to a meeting - not advertisements. The advertisements are a boost to Central Branch members. What is meant in the resolution is when a hall is specially hired.

Vote: Islington Amendment Lost 22-26

Camden Resolution Lost 21-25

Discussion continued on the Socialist Standard during which a Central Branch member raised the questions: why "The" had been dropped from the Socialist Standard title; why the Socialist Standard had not been advertised despite £3,000 being donated for this purpose; why not an article on Einstein. In reply, the Socialist Standard Production Committee said they would put "The" back if the Party wanted.

Instructed Resolution 7 (c) Redbridge Branch "That this Conference affirms that the function of the Socialist Standard Production Committee should be:

- (i) to bring out the Socialist Standard on time each month;
- (ii) the avoidance of libel and other grounds for action against the Party;
- (iii) to see that all material published is in line with the Party's case;
- (iv) to publish articles aimed at convincing readers that the S.P.G.B. analysis is unique and correct;
- (v) "That the main interests of the Socialist Standard are concerned with subjects on economics, politics and history".

Islington Branch Amendment "Delete all after 'should be' on line 3 and replace with:

- (i) to edit and publish a journal which advocates the principles of Socialism in a way that is likely to inspire the first-time reader, persuade convinced Socialists to join the S.P.G.B. and provide information for those who are already Socialists (in that order).
- (ii) to see that the material published is in line with a wide range of issues which concern the contemporary working class.
- (iii) to publish articles aimed at convincing readers that the S.P.G.B. and our Companion Parties are a movement and not a monument.
- (iv) to ensure that the appearance of the Socialist Standard is attractive and recognisable."

Westminster Branch Amendment "Clause (ii) be amended to read 'To ensure accuracy of facts and quotations as far as possible and avoid libel.'"

Camden Branch Addendum "At the end of clause (iii) to add 'and to explain and apply the Declaration of Principles in the light of modern events and to deal with opposing arguments.'"

Westminster Branch Amendment "Clause (iv) - the whole of the wording be deleted and be replaced by 'To produce a propaganda journal that will win support for the

principles of the Party by containing articles that will convince readers that the Party case and its analysis of world events are correct.' "

Westminster Branch Amendment "Clause (v) - the whole of the wording be deleted and be replaced by 'To aim at a journal that explains and comments upon world events from the Socialist viewpoint. The predominant interest of the Socialist Standard must always be politics, economics and social history; and with the continual extension of the boundaries of these studies, the Socialist Standard must be alive to all aspects of social activity and be able to relate them to the Socialist case. The Socialist Standard should reflect and reinforce the widening of the Party horizon.' "

The Socialist Standard does not have its own policy; currently it is based on past practice. The term 'Party case' is too vague. Socialist Standard must not be too academic, but not follow pattern of the popular press. Socialist Standard shows Party is active; it is attractive and recognisable. Satisfied with Socialist Standard Production Committee. Resolution comes from the 1958 Investigative Committee. Socialist Standard not to go their own way. Main Object must be to convince people to become Socialists. Socialist Standard is of a high standard, but book reviews a bit heavy. A member felt the Socialist Standard Production Committee's reply to his criticism was inadequate. Socialist Standard must be relevant. It was reported that the Executive Committee was going to discuss the Socialist Standard every 2 months. Sales are going up because we want to sell it. Dangerous for the Party to concentrate on Marx - commentary is crucial. Too many special issues lately, but need writers to submit articles. Articles need to be more than just 'not incorrect'.

Following a procedural discussion "That the Islington amendment be considered first" was Lost 11-12.

The vote proceeded:

<u>Westminster Amendment</u>	on Clause 5 was	<u>Lost</u>	<u>15-27</u>
<u>Westminster Amendment</u>	on Clause 4 was	<u>Lost</u>	<u>15-27</u>
<u>Camden Addendum</u>	on Clause 3 was	<u>Lost</u>	<u>18-24</u>
<u>Westminster Amendment</u>	on Clause 2 was	<u>Lost</u>	<u>13-31</u>
<u>Islington Amendment</u>	was	<u>Carried</u>	<u>24-23</u>
The <u>Sub-Resolution</u> was then		<u>Carried</u>	<u>25-21</u>

Socialist Standard Production Committee contd ..

Instructed Resolution 7 (d) Westminster Branch "That this Conference recognises the improvement in the Socialist Standard during 1979, but acknowledges that to a large extent future improvement depends on the Standard being a Party not a Committee effort. If the Standard is to make progress all active members must take an interest and the dialogue which the 1979 Socialist Standard Production Committee commenced with the Party must be continued. This Conference recognises the Socialist Standard as the Party's most important weapon, which can only truly fulfil its purpose by the widest participation and support of the membership in its writing, production and distribution."

Redbridge Branch Amendment "On line 7 delete all before 'This Conference'."

The Socialist Standard Production Committee had written to three branches to ask them what they would like to write on. The membership was the most important weapon. MOTION (Moss - Swansea - and Cottis - Southend) "Vote be taken" was Lost 11-18. It was finally said that the Socialist Standard, though not yet first rate, was on the right road.

Vote: Redbridge Amendment was Lost 17-29
Westminster Resolution 7 (d) was Carried 29-17

Discussion on the Socialist Standard Production Committee now ended.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Literature Secretary The Literature Secretary asked Conference to note that the Party had few pamphlets. She also informed Conference that P.D.C. (the commercial distributors) paid once a year.

New Pamphlets Committee

Instructed Resolution 6 (a) Camden Branch "That this Conference endorses the recommendation of the 1979 Delegate Meeting that the Executive Committee adhere to the practice of reading the drafts of pamphlets at the Executive Committee table, thus ensuring that any errors, ambiguity or unsound arguments occurring in the text are dealt with prior to publication."

Westminster Branch Amendment "Delete all after 'table' on line 4."

The procedure had not been carried out with the Special Issue of the Socialist Standard on Marxian Economics. A committee similar to the Socialist Standard Production Committee is wanted. The 'Special Issue' had been read by the whole membership, therefore no need to read it. Everybody reading it does not mean everybody agrees with it. The procedure is tedious in all Executive Committee members having a copy and going through it together, but wise. Time taken by recent Execu-

tive Committees has been objected to, but it has been exceptional. Writers are not the best judges of their own work of ambiguities; it is the only method workable.

Vote: Westminster Amendment Lost 22-25
Camden Resolution Carried 27-21

New Pamphlets Committee contd..

Instructed Resolution 6 (b) Swansea Branch "That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to produce a new revised Party Introductory leaflet."

Bolton Branch Addendum "Add after 'Party' in last line 'provided that any new investment has been previously discussed and approved by Conference.' "

These were the only free and permanently available leaflets. Several criticism were raised into terminology for first time readers. It was hoped there would be a review of the foreign language ones too. The criticisms of the terminology were in general challenged. Foreign languages leaflets should be written in the languages and not just translated directly.

Vote: Bolton Addendum Carried 30-6
Sub-Resolution as addended Carried 35-4

Conference adjourned at 6 p.m.

Sunday, 6th April

Conference recommenced at 10.55 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Instructed Resolution 6 (c) Westminster Branch "That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to publish for sale the Marxian Economics pamphlet immediately."

Mid Herts Branch Addendum "Add after 'immediately' the words 'and it shall include a foreword explaining the pamphlets origin and recognised shortcomings.' "

The General Secretary read six resolutions from branches on the matter, and one from the Executive Committee to Conference which sought guidance as to whether the Marxian Economics pamphlet should be published. Delegates made the following points. It would take 3 years to produce another pamphlet, therefore use the present one. Useful though it had shortcomings, but not of a fundamental nature. A foreword could not be put into the pamphlet without resetting. A sheet could be inserted clarifying the shortcomings. There is currently no economics pamphlet; all pamphlets are low in numbers. The issue is 18 months old. As a pamphlet it should have gone to the Executive Committee. Delegates both agreed and disagreed with the New Pamphlets Committee Report on the proposed pamphlet concerning shortcomings. In answer to the statement the New Pamphlets Committee were 'nit-picking'. A member of the committee pointed out that the pamphlet would be read by non-members and opponents who would do their own 'nit-picking'. The whole Party had read it, but nobody said they would write an alternative.

Vote: Mid Herts Addendum Lost 10-33
Westminster Resolution Carried 29-14

Instructed Resolution 6 (d) Islington Branch "That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to ensure that the Pamphlets Committee produces topical leaflets (possibly duplicated) to be distributed at events of political significance for the Socialist Party, such as strikes, demonstrations, political meetings, plays and films."

Mid Herts Branch Amendment "Delete '(possibly duplicated)'."

Swansea Branch Amendment "Delete all after the word 'distributed' and replace with 'by Party members'."

Bolton Branch Amendment "Delete all after 'Socialist Party' on line 5."

Duplicating leaflets lends itself to topicality and cheapness. Duplicated leaflets looked shoddy. They could be made attractive. Fill gap between the Socialist Standard and pamphlets. Large numbers of leaflets left at Head Office as they are not used by members. Party should use all means of propaganda available.

Vote: Bolton Amendment Carried 29-14
Swansea Amendment Lost 5-35
Mid Herts Amendment Lost 11-31
Islington as amended by Bolton was Carried 28-14

A Floor Resolution (D'Arcy and Skelton of Camden) "That the floor resolution of Grant and Powell of Islington be dealt with" was Carried 17-3. Floor Resolution (Grant and Powell of Islington) "That Conference is of the view that the Executive Committee, when dealing with leaflets, should not alter their style, but should concern itself only with whether or not they put the party case" was Carried 22-3.

Conference adjourned from 1.15p.m. to 2.05 p.m.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Instructed Resolutions 6 (e) Westminster Branch "That this Conference deplores the limited range of Party pamphlets and the out-dated nature of what we sell. The Conference instructs the Executive Committee to set up an ad hoc committee, or to require a special investigative body, if set up, to look into the matter and make concrete proposals for its remedy." and

Instructed Resolution 8 (b) Westminster Branch "That this Conference considers that an urgent task for the Party in 1980 is a thorough review of its printed propaganda. The Conference instructs the Executive Committee to set up at once an investigating body to carry out this review and to report back to the Executive Committee by December, 1980 for consideration at the 1981 Annual Conference." Areas which must be covered by the review are:

- (i) Socialist Standard The composition, terms of reference and the working methods of the Socialist Standard Production Committee. The content, appearance and function of the Socialist Standard. The frequency of publication of the Socialist Standard.
- (ii) Pamphlets The composition, terms of reference and working methods of the New Pamphlets Committee. The style and contents of Party pamphlets. The publication of leaflets on a restricted theme.
- (iii) Distribution The efficiency of the present methods of distribution. The continued employment of a commercial distributor. The finance of the Socialist Standard and the keeping of accurate sales figures."

were taken together.

There was concern expressed over the low number of pamphlets available. Had the Party produced the right type in the past; have a large self-vetting Pamphlets Committee to go to the Executive Committee for guidance only. Suggestions were made for a short pamphlet on War, the Centenary of Marx's Death (1983). There were precedents for Socialist Standard articles being published as a leaflet. The time the T.U. pamphlet took to publish was an exception - a short pamphlet on inflation cannot be short, it is a too complicated subject. When stocks are low the New Pamphlets Committee asks for (1) a reprint (2) a revision (3) a new pamphlet, the Executive Committee should give the New Pamphlets Committee guidance. What the Party lacks are not members to sit on investigating committees, but members to write pamphlets - this is a big job. Does the Party want pamphlets? Questions of the Day had a print order of 5,000 2 years ago and with 750 only left, that is not a bad sale and it is not yet out of date.

Vote: Westminster Resolution 6 (e): Carried 26-13
Westminster Resolution 8 (b) Carried 30-15

Instructed Resolution 8 (a) Redbridge Branch "That this Conference agrees that Party literature and advertising dealing with the change from Capitalism to Socialism should make it clear that this can only be brought about by working class political action."

Articles should be accurate. The class struggle should not be avoided. Success of Guardian Advertisements - 750 replies since last June, showed it best not to introduce the Class Struggle too soon. Advertisements should not mislead. We cannot know why we get better returns. What about the non-replies? Need also to convince people they are involved in the class struggle.

Vote: Redbridge Resolution Carried 30-4

Publicity Committee Cost of advertisements in the Guardian were about £7 each with 96 replies over 8 weeks.

Instructed Resolution 3 Islington Branch "That Conference instructs the Executive Committee to give serious attention to the fact that a substantial number of our members who are organised in branches are organisationally inactive, i.e. in terms of literature selling, indoor and outdoor meetings, local advertising, canvassing, etc. The Executive Committee is instructed to investigate the present level of activity of all branches and report to the Annual Delegate Meeting 1980 with details of the present position and proposed remedies."

This was not a new problem - get it in perspective. A committee would solve nothing. It is the job of the Central Organiser to do this. Inactivity can not be solved by enquiries. Inactive branches were a liability to the Party.

Vote: Islington Resolution 3 Lost 17-23

Branch Reports Branches reported on meetings held including special indoor and outdoor meetings. The winter weather had off some. Some recently joined members had found pubs a good place to sell the Socialist Standard. A branch had a regular mailing list of 100 names. Branches which were struggling wanted to continue. A branch's membership had suffered from the bad feelings in the Party, but now intended to hold discussion meetings. 3 branches had experienced difficulty with branch rooms during the year, being either evicted or having their rent put up

or both.

Instructed Resolution 9 Westminster Branch "That this Conference considers that the Party needs a theoretical journal now, to provide a medium where problems arising from its case can be clarified, and socialist knowledge extended. To this end, the Conference instructs the Executive Committee to prepare the way for the publication of a Party theoretical journal."

The Party must be relentlessly self-critical. Delegates expressed the view this subject had been dealt with many times before.

Vote: Westminster Resolution Lost 15-26

International Secretary A delegate raised the point that a Companion Party was not putting 100% of the Socialist case. The General Secretary asked the delegate if the accusation against the Companion Party was supported by his branch. A vote to discuss was Lost 12-13.

The General Secretary reported that Fraternal Greetings had been received from the Socialist Party of Canada. It was Agreed by Conference that the General Secretary reply on their behalf.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Education Committee Level of Education was aimed a little too high at the present, but only needs to be toned down a little. The old reading list would be useful - run the two side by side. The principle of the present committee was to give straightforward explanations. The committee had been hindered by lack of Education Organiser for 9 months. It was intended to hold a speakers' class; a new reading list was available. There is a need to have basic practical hints on speaking. Members need to be taught how to put the Party case and particular types of meetings.

Financial Report Literature Sales down by 25%; cost of Socialist Standard up 40%.

MOTION (Selwyn of Westminster and McNeeney of Mid Herts) "The Executive Committee's Report to Conference 1980 be Adopted" was Agreed.

Conference adjourned at 6 p.m.